

JUL 24 2000

Audubon's Friends, Part I

By Harry Fuller

Several men are commemorated by American bird names thanks to their association with John James Audubon. These people were among the men and women who lent their talents to Audubon's enterprises. Gifted and charming, Audubon would subsume their talents, knowledge, and discoveries into his publications. Most of the scientific discoveries first published by Audubon, most of the writing in his books, and even much of the botanical and background art in his books came from collaborators.

Here is a brief look at some of the people who supported or contributed to Audubon's famous accomplishments:

Reverend Doctor John Bachman (1790–1874)

Rev. Bachman lived most of his life in Charleston, South Carolina. Before moving from Pennsylvania as a young man, he was a friend of Alexander Wilson. Bachman was always an avid naturalist, despite his fulltime duties as an Episcopal minister. He met Audubon in Charleston in 1831 on Audubon's first

day in that southern city. When Bachman learned of Audubon's pursuit of *all* American birds, he insisted this new friend stay at his house. Thus began a partnership—though sometimes strained—that lasted the rest of Audubon's life.

Bachman and Audubon spent days together in the field and long nights talking about plants and animals. In the end, Bachman got scientific credit for discovering two warblers: Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*) and Swainson's Warbler (*Limothlypis swainsonii*), although the latter had actually been first drawn some years earlier by an obscure Georgian artist, John Abbott. Bachman was the first to bring the rare Bachman's Warbler to the attention of science and was the only naturalist to see it alive for half a century. The bird was photographed near Charleston for the last time 40 years ago and has not been certainly seen since 1962. The little warbler was never captured alive. Few skins are in museum collections.

For 15 years Bachman, Audubon and the Audubon sons worked on Audubon's final opus, *Viviparous Quadrupeds*, published 1845–1854. The final volumes were finished after the elder Audubon died. Bachman wrote all the text. Here in California, we frequently see a third bird named for Rev. Bachman. Audubon gave the Latin

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Expert Birders Needed

The Friends of Sausal Creek bird-monitoring team is seeking the assistance of a few expert birders to help expand our knowledge of local species. We meet one monthly on a Saturday morning. For more information call Anne Hayes at (510)231-9566 or Martha Lowe at (510)339-7903. You can also visit their web site (www.aoinstitute.org/sausal/).



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

**SATURDAY APRIL 3,
BREEDING BIRDS OF
SAN FRANCISCO.**

See March Gull for details. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229, harry_fuller@zd.com. (*)

**SUNDAY APRIL 4,
STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

See March Gull for details. Reminder: this is the first day of daylight savings time. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

**SATURDAY APRIL 10,
BOTHE -NAPA VALLEY
STATE PARK.**

See March Gull for details. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (\$)

**SUNDAY APRIL 11,
SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.**

See March Gull for details. Leader: Ron Lindeman (510) 636-0311. \$

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 14,
MINI-TRIP TO SUNOL
REGIONAL PARK.**

See March Gull for details.. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman \$(*)

**SATURDAY APRIL 17,
POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASORE
ELEVENTH ANNUAL ALL-DAY
BIRDING BLITZ**

See March Gull for details. Leaders: Leon Abrams (415) 453-9980 (work), (510) 843-4107 (home) and Cathy Purchis (510) 865-9482. (*)

**SUNDAY APRIL 18,
TIDEPOOLING.**

This half day trip is by reservation only. Call leader Ron Lindeman (510) 636-0311 for reservations. Heavy rain cancels.

**SUNDAY APRIL 18,
TILDEN REGIONAL PARK**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot for this half-day trip. Enter the park from either Canyon Drive (where Spruce meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.) or Shasta Rd., off Grizzly Peak Blvd. in Berkeley and follow the signs to the Nature Center at the north end of the park. We will bird Jewel Lake and other areas. Orange crowned Warblers and House Wrens should be vocal, Black-headed Grosbeaks should be present, and we hope to see migrating hummingbirds. Beginners welcome. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Lewis Cooper (510) 526-1773.

**SATURDAY APRIL 24,
MINES ROAD, LIVERMORE AREA.**

See March Gull for details. Due to limited parking along roads, carpooling is strongly recommended. Leader: George Bing (925) 443-5868.

**SUNDAY APRIL 25,
BOLINAS LAGOON AND
AREA, MARIN COUNTY.**

See March Gull for details. Leader: Ken Burton (415) 669-1847.

**FRIDAY APRIL 30 - SUNDAY
MAY 2, PALM SPRINGS,
MORONGO VALLEY.**

This trip is full.

**SATURDAY MAY 1,
SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Road. (The freeway sign is marked Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84.) Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about 5 miles. Bring lunch and liquids in preparation for a 4-5 mile walk. We expect to see a variety of the common breeding birds, including flycatchers, swallows, vireos and warblers. This trip is also good for wildflowers. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910 \$(*)

**SUNDAY MAY 2,
STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

**SUNDAY MAY 2,
WILDCAT CANYON
REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will drive a short distance to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd. We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird the brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants such as Western Tanager and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify com-

mon trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Bring lunch and liquids for this six mile hike, which Malcolm Sproul will lead for the 20th year. The trip ends at about 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (925) 376-8945. (*)

**SATURDAY MAY 8,
BRIONES REGIONAL PARK.**

For this half day trip, meet at 8:00 a.m. at the west entrance to the Park, off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. See May 12 trip for directions and trip description. Beginners welcome. Heavy Rain cancels. Leader Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936. \$

**WEDNESDAY MAY 12,
MINI-TRIP TO BRIONES
REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to the Park, off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. From Oakland take Hwy. 24 and exit at the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Road. Turn right and go about 4.5 miles to the Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Road). From the Richmond area, take San Pablo Dam Road to Bear Creek Rd.; turn left onto Bear Creek Road. From Berkeley, cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Road, continuing beyond Inspiration Point. Cross San Pablo Dam Road onto Bear Creek Road. We should see and hear breeding birds such as Lazuli Bunting, Chipping Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, Ash-throated Flycatcher, orioles and more. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY,
JUNE 4-6, YOSEMITE'S
BIRD LIFE.**

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life, typically including seven flycatchers (four Empidonax), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance on Friday, June 4, at 3 p. m., and at 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 5, and Sunday, June 6. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120 (30 miles from Yosemite Valley). On Saturday we will bird all day and look for owls in the evening. On Sunday we will end by 3 pm. Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow and Crane Flat in the Park (reservations required - (800) 436-7275); and Forest Service campgrounds Dimond O on Evergreen Road (the road to Hetch Hetchy), and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120. Lodging on or near Hwy. 120 includes Sugar Pine Ranch (209) 962-7823, Yosemite Westgate Motel (209) 962-5281, Evergreen Lodge (209) 379-2606, Lee's Middle Fork (209) 962-7408, and Buck Meadows Lodge (209) 962-5281. Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots (wet meadows) and a large flashlight for owling. Be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about six miles. Leaders: Dave Quady (510) 704-9353 and Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. \$ (*)

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY,
JUNE 19-20, YUBA PASS.**

On Saturday meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass summit parking area (Hwy. 49), 19 miles east of Sierra City. Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on

Hwy. 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or, take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including Dippers, flycatchers, warblers, and Calliope Hummingbirds. On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 (by the sawmill) about one mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds off Hwy. 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3300 ft.) 2 mi. east of Sierra City, and Chapman Creek (elev. 5800 ft.) 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available at Sierra Chalet (530) 862-1110, Buttes Motel (530) 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151, Bassett's Station Motel (530) 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (530) 862-1191 and Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122, and: Busch & Herringbone Country Inn (530) 862-1501. (Check with proprietor for location of the motel or inn.) Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (*)

PLAN AHEAD: Lassen National Park, Dan and Joan Murphy, June 25-27; Yosemite Alpine Ecology, George Peyton, July 24-25. }

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an (*), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



About now, we humans who are spoiled by living in California begin to yearn for blue skies and sunshine. Our long, "ugly" winter rains have driven us indoors where we watch the weather news with hope. PLEASE, don't rain this weekend! Unlike our northern neighbors, we don't have picnics or go boating in the rain (unless we can't get out of it). Usually we get our hopes up in mid-February when the plum and cherry trees blossom (along with the sneeze-starters: acacia, scotch broom and the dreaded pine pollen) and the weather warms—a sort of "false spring." But now we can look for signs of change. The birds have been bursting into courtship song for some time now and a few have begun nesting.

Spring wildflowers are going to be spectacular again this year, thanks to that dreary, seemingly unending, rain. Why not combine a wildflower walk with some bird watching? For flowers you have to walk slowly and look down. For the birds, you're already creeping along so listen and look up from time to time. Just as autumn leaf peepers in the northeast watch the fall color creep southward, our wild flower watchers follow the flowers' peak bloom as it begins in the south and works its way north as well as beginning at sea level and slowly rising up the mountains. You need a field guide to identify the many kinds of blooms — far more difficult to me than naming the birds. The simpler guides are

fine for most but as you "get into it" you're likely to be hooked and find yourself wanting to know more. just like bird watching!

One of my favorite combination nature walks is near Clayton on the north side of Mt. Diablo: Mitchell Canyon. Follow the creek and feast your eyes on the April wild flowers and revel in the sights and songs of birds. I still vividly remember when I was a novice birder in a birding class and saw my first male black-headed grosbeak there, singing his heart out and cooperating by perching long enough for a good view of his colors. He's still a springtime favorite of mine—beautiful bird with a gorgeous song.

If your quads are in good shape, there is a steep but spectacular creek side trail, which goes down the southwest side of Mt. Tamalpais to Stinson Beach. I'm having a brain cramp as to the name of the parking lot along Highway 1 from Mill Valley to Stinson. Have one person park there and then you need to park a car below and go back to the trailhead. If you really like tough uphill hikes then it's not necessary to double up on cars. Along the creek a winter wren treated us to his amazingly loud burbling song, defending his territory. Calypso orchids and other interesting wildflowers can be found along the trail and there are some great views.

Other good walks with both birds and flowers are Annadel State Park near Sonoma, Black Diamond Mines Regional Park,

Briones Regional Park, Lake Lagunitas in Marin County, Point Reyes National Seashore, Redwood Regional Park (the trail to Abbott's Lagoon off Pierce Point Rd. is great), Sunol Regional Wilderness (where we saw a nesting great-horned owl and her young on a ledge across a rocky canyon), Tilden Regional Park, and the ever-popular Golden Gate Park. I look forward to exploring the Presidio one-day. Audubon's Bouverie Preserve in Glen Ellen is wonderful. You can call for docent-led walks at (707)938-4554 Tues-Fri. Of course, there are many more sites further afield as well as drives which feature birds and flowers, which you can appreciate with the usual frequent stops.

Wildflowers are abundant in springtime at Pinnacles National Monument in Monterey County—one more place I hope to visit. Outside San Diego another spot on my springtime wish list is the Borrego Springs area. Might as well dream!

Birders are an adventurous group, travelling long distances at times, exploring new territory. Some of my non-birding friends seem to live such narrow lives, not knowing how to find their way to many places in our Bay Area. Whether it's planned or spontaneous or simply being in the right place at the right time, I hope you'll have a special experience amid spring's beauty.

Farallons Trip Set For August 22

Golden Gate Audubon and Shearwater Journeys are offering an exciting and informative pelagic trip to view the fantastic nesting bird populations at the Farallon Islands on Sunday, August 22. The special GGAS members-only price of \$55 is non-refundable.

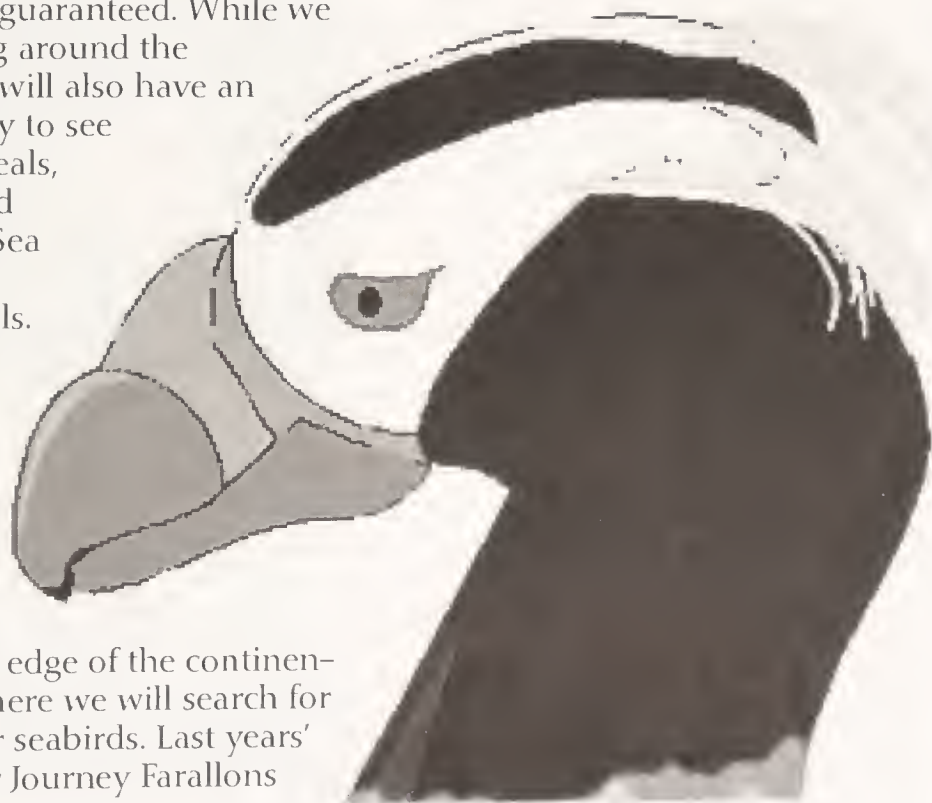
We will depart from Sausalito aboard the *Salty Lady* for an eight-hour adventure to the Farallon Islands and beyond.

The Farallon Islands are home to nearly 200,000 nesting seabirds. We will look over the colonies of Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and Brandt's Cormorants, for Tufted Puffins. On most Bay Area pelagic trips the Puffins can be difficult to find, but on the Farallons the birds are visiting their nesting areas and are almost guaranteed. While we are cruising around the islands we will also have an opportunity to see Elephant Seals, Stellar's and California Sea Lions and Harbor Seals.

After viewing the islands, weather permitting, we will head west to the edge of the continental shelf where we will search for deep-water seabirds. Last years' Shearwater Journey Farallons

trip was excellent. We spotted Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed Shearwater, Buller's Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Ashy Storm-Petrel, Long-tailed Jaeger, South Polar Skua, Sabine's Gull, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets. Cetaceans were represented by Blue Whale, Humpback Whale, Dall's Porpoise and Common and Northern Right-Whale Dolphins.

This trip will sell out, so make sure to get your reservation check in early! If you can't make this trip, watch for our Monterey Bay trip October 23. For more information please call Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-0983. Or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Shearwater Journeys, P.O. Box 190, Hollister, CA 95024



A Conversation on Herons

SF Natural History Series
April 22, 1999 at 7:30 p.m.
The Josephine Randall Museum
San Francisco

Nancy DeStefanis, Stow Lake Site Coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, narrates Judy Irving's new short film *Heron Island* filmed at San Francisco's thriving Great Blue Heron colony. DeStefanis will talk about the courtship, mating and parenting habits of these incredibly charismatic birds. The nesting season is underway!

The program will conclude with an accordion rendition of *My Blue Herons* by Nancy and friends. There is plenty of parking at the museum. Admission is free. Come early and see the exhibits.

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) is a not-for profit research organization dedicated to advancing knowledge of birds and their habitats through original research, and educational activities. Results of their scientific investigations are provided to governmental agencies, industry and the public to support informed natural resource management decisions for the San Francisco Bay Area. The SFBBO was founded in 1981. The SFBBO can be contacted at P.O. Box 247 1290 Hope St, Alviso, CA 95002. Phone 408.946.6548, Fax 408.9456.9279. Web site SFBBO@aol.com.

Audubon's Friends

name *Haematopus bachmanii* to the specimen brought to Philadelphia from the Pacific Coast by Nuttall and Townsend in 1835. We know it commonly as the Black Oystercatcher.

Spencer Fullerton Baird (1823–1887)

Baird, even as a young man, was already making a name for himself when Audubon named a new species of sparrow for him. Baird went on to more than justify the honor. He became the most powerful natural scientist of his generation and had a long and productive career at the Smithsonian Institution.

Elliott Coues later named a sandpiper after Baird (*Calidris bairdii*), and Stejneger named a Hawaiian creeper (Akiki Creeper [*Oreomyza bairdi*]) after him as well.

The first identified Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) was shot by the younger men who accompanied John Audubon (at about 60 years old) up the Missouri River in 1843. On that expedition were several memorable men, including John G. Bell.

John G. Bell (1812–1889)

Bell was in the prime of his life when he was hired as a hunter and taxidermist to go with Audubon's group up the Missouri River in 1843, for which he was paid \$500. Already known as the best taxidermist in the United States, Bell was hired by Audubon at the urging of Rev. Bachman, who needed well-preserved skins for the mammal

book he and Audubon were doing.

Bell's taxidermy shop at Broadway and Worth streets in Manhattan was a hub for natural historians in the middle of the 19th century. It was a combination social club and ongoing seminar. Bell knew the elderly Audubon and the young Frank Chapman, who at century's end would found the Christmas Bird Count. He also knew Baird, Cassin, George Lawrence, Major LeConte, Titian Peale, and Theodore Roosevelt.

A keen-eyed hunter, Bell, along with Edward Harris, killed many of the specimens collected on Audubon's western trip. Among them was the first described specimen of Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*), taken on the Missouri River northwest of Fort Leavenworth. Other birds discovered on the trip: Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*), Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*), and Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*).

In 1849–1850, Bell visited California on a collecting trip and discovered four new species, all described by John Cassin: Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*), White-headed Woopecker (*Picoides arbolarvatus*), Williamson's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*), and Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*). Bell shot his first Sage Sparrow near Sonoma, and Cassin gave the little bird its Latin name to honor Bell.

Thomas Bewick (1753–1828)

Bewick was the best-known English illustrator of his generation. His fine woodcuts of birds, mammals, and rural scenes made woodcutting an art form. He never saw America, but most natural history students, including Audubon, knew Bewick's works. Audubon met the elderly Bewick on his first trip to England. It was 1837, and Audubon that year honored Bewick in naming a new wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) he had first shot in Louisiana 16 years earlier.



Of Bewick, Audubon wrote: "A complete Englishman, full of life and energy though now 74, very witty and clever, better acquainted with America than most of his countrymen, and an honor to England. . . . Thomas Bewick is a son of Nature. Nature alone reared him under her peaceful care, and he in gratitude of heart

has copied one department of her works that must stand unrivalled forever [Bewick's woodcuts of British birds]."

Shortly before he died, Bewick paid a final visit to Audubon and encountered another visitor, William Swainson. It was an informal gathering of the three greatest natural history artists of their age.

Joseph Coolidge (1812-??)

Audubon made a bird-collecting trip to the Canadian Maritime Provinces in 1833. Several young men, including Audubon's eldest son, John, Thomas Lincoln, and Joseph Coolidge accompanied him. No bird was ever named for Coolidge, nor is there any evidence he was even interested in birds.

Audubon wrote in his journal of the trip: "Coolidge is an excellent sailor. . . . Coolidge, too, has been bred to the sea, and is a fine active youth of 21."

The expedition found only one new species, a sparrow named for Lincoln (*Melospiza lincolni*). But they found many birds new to Audubon and some birds anyone today would love to see: Labrador Duck (extinct by 1880), Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), and Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis* [probably also extinct]).

At one rough point of the trip, Audubon wrote, "All our party except Coolidge were deadly sick." Indeed, Coolidge's strong constitution enabled him to outlive all the others from that expedition.

By 1863, he had moved to San



Francisco and held various jobs: lumberman, justice of the peace, secretary for the Merchants Exchange Association for 15 years, and then storekeeper for the Spring Valley Water Works as an old man. The last official record I could find of Coolidge was in 1899, when he would have been 87 years old.

In 1896, 60 years after the maritime trip, the elderly Coolidge wrote to Audubon's granddaughter, Maria, who was editing the great artist's journals. Coolidge recalled Audubon: "You had only to meet him to love him; and when you had conversed with him for a moment, you looked upon him as an old friend, rather than a stranger. . . . To this day I can see him, a magnificent gray-haired man, child-like in his simplicity, kind-hearted, noble-souled, lover of nature and lover of youth, friend of humanity, and one whose religion was the golden rule."

Donations

Least Tern Circle

(\$200 or more)

Harold C. Kirker, Jane Dang, Mary E. Schaefer,

Clapper Rail Circle

(\$100 or more)

Lisa Frost & Steven Cochrane,

In Memoriam

Randi Slaughter & Laurent Broussal in memory of Helen & Howard Lawrence; Ann Phelan in memory of Joan Tuttle Phelan

Gifts (under \$100)

Maire A Gamma, Daniel Roth & Louise Brotsky, Regina & Ralph Anavy, Mrs. Laurence Stein, Alfreda Cullinan, Peter Seubert, Lynn M. Strandberg, Barbara L. Schieck, Zoia Horn & R. Dean Galloway, Rebeca Osborn-Coolidge & John S. Collidge, C. Don Mac Neill, Mary C. Betlach, Joseph E. Johnson, Jean M. Perata, Gloria Markowitz, Mary Ellen Harte, Daniel R. Solwren, Mary L. Sullivan, Nancy & Jack Worthen, Linda S. Knight, Roberta A. Guise, Lennart H. Olsson, Patti Roberts, Carol & David Rice, Jean Puffer, David Loeb, Dawn Ann Kooyumjian, Sally and D. Russell Symon, Jr., Inezb Kjar, Patricia & John Elsner, Carol Edward & Andrew Nathan, Sharon & Richard Tamm, Joyce & Edgar Lehmann, Jane M. Morgan, Marjorie D. Schwarz, Jean & Laurence Maderis, Susan J. Watson, Judith Dunham.

The Society Welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2550 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

Red-Tails in Love: A Wildlife Drama in Central Park

One day last April, while visiting family in New York, I followed my usual Manhattan morning birding routine: I caught the 1# subway at 23rd Street uptown to 72nd and Broadway. I walked into Central Park, crossed Strawberry Fields, and headed for the Ramble. I had been there for only a moment when a group of Blue Jays began to scold something out of sight in



the trees. While I was trying to locate the object of their scorn a woman walking a bicycle asked what I was looking for. I said "I think the Jays are mobbing a hawk, or possibly an owl." "They can be very raucous at this time of year" she replied with a knowing smile. She introduced herself as Marie. Her bike was a classic "girl's" bike, with a basket in

the back and a toy white shark tied to the handlebars, and around her neck she wore a pair of Bausch and Lomb Elite binoculars; I knew then she was OK. I asked what she had seen, and she asked if I knew about the bird register at the Boathouse – I didn't. Marie said that someone had reported a Louisiana Waterthrush below the Balcony Bridge, I replied that I didn't know which bridge that was, so she offered to show me.

At the bridge we were watching a Swamp Sparrow when a woman wearing a hat with an enormous brim and compact binoculars came up to Marie. "Are you Marie Winn?" the woman asked, Marie said yes sheepishly. "I just loved the book – it's really wonderful!" Marie smiled and said thank you. The woman dashed off to catch up with a group of birders on their way to see a Yellow-crowned Night Heron. The book was *Red-Tails in Love: A Wildlife Drama in Central Park*.

It wasn't until I was back at home in San Francisco that I had an opportunity to read *Red-Tails in Love*. At the start I was rather concerned. The title *Red-Tails in Love*, is ripe with anthropomorphism. I probably would not have picked it up if I had not met Marie that day in the Ramble, but I am glad I did. Winn tells the story of Pale Male, the book's pro-



tagonist Red-tailed Hawk, and his mates with a journalist's sensibility and an investigative reporter's drive, and yet her compassion for the birds shines through.

The book is also about a group of dedicated New York City birders and hawk watchers known as the regulars. Through the regulars' descriptions in the bird register, telephone messages, and direct



quotes, Winn is able to give readers a feel of the emotional investment the regulars have in the hawks and the other birds that visit Central Park. It wouldn't be a tale of New York without a few celebrities, and *Red-tails in Love* is no exception. Pale Male and his mate First Love decide to build their nest on an apartment building occupied by Mary Tyler Moore. When the hawks aren't on the nest they frequent a near-by penthouse occupied by Woody Allen and Soon-Yi. Even Glen Close makes a cameo appearance.

Red-Tails in Love is more than just a rapturous romance, there are mysteries to be solved, a death, and detective work to be done. Winn weaves information about bird banding, migration, Saw-Whet Owls and their food, butterfly watching and other topics of interest into the narrative. Disney couldn't have created a better story, and this one is true! Hard-core birders, to as well as those who don't know a finch from a falcon, will find *Red-Tails in Love* a delightful read.

Later that day in the park, Marie left Balcony Bridge for home, and I had given up on the Waterthrush. I was headed off to look for a Red-headed Woodpecker when I spotted a Red-tail Hawk flying over the Model-boat Pond, I dismissed the bird as "just" a Red-tail. At

the time I did not realize I had just seen one of New York City's most esteemed citizens—Pale Male! Now I can't wait to get back to New York City to see the Ramble, the regulars, and the Red-tails in Love.

Red-tails in Love, a Wildlife Drama in Central Park, by Marie Winn, published by Pantheon

Editor's Note – If you have special book you would like to review for GULL readers, please send it to the Editor. We would also like to receive reviews of Web sites for birders and conservationists.

Society's Charter Renewed

Audubon-California recently informed GGAS that our charter has been renewed for the coming year and that we are certified as a chapter of the National Audubon Society until June 1999.

In making the announcement, Audubon-California said in part: "The Golden Gate Audubon Society is doing an excellent job in virtually all program areas. Your board members, committee chairs and volunteers are performing at a very high level of commitment and effectiveness, which is reflected in all that you are able to accomplish as a chapter."

"The variety and depth of your conservation activities is extremely impressive. As usual the passion and skill of Arthur Feinstein and other members of the Conservation Committee is manifested in specific gains and greater protection for the birds and wildlife of the San Francisco Bay region. We applaud your continuing restoration, monitoring, and education programs on behalf of bay wetlands; your efforts to establish a National Wildlife Refuge in Alameda; your advocacy for the Gateway Valley, and the many other ways you are working to make life a little easier for the birds and wildlife of the bay area."

The announcement concluded: "Golden Gate Audubon is to be commended on its excellent environmental education and outreach programs, interesting monthly meetings, an impressive field trip schedule, and a very informative newsletter."



Jan. 27 - Feb. 25, 1999

The winter rains continued at regular intervals throughout the period, resulting in visible greening of the hillsides and lush blooms of flowering trees. At the end of the period, iris began to appear among the grasses, and the morning air was decorated with songs of many bird species. In my Berkeley neighborhood, Song Sparrows and Spotted Towhees were prominent members of the chorus. The winter storms produced some shoreline sightings of pelagic species, and a few early spring representatives of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds and Barn Swallows began to appear. Good bird news this period was the Jan. 30 release of seven more young California Condors into the Santa Lucia Mountains, to join 5 others previously released in the area. We will be awaiting reports of their activities.

Loons to Boobies.

The Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) that appeared for its 6th

winter last November, was seen again off Lovers' Point in Pacific Grove, MTY, until at least Feb. 17 (MPRBA). The Laysan Albatross visiting Point Arena, MEN, remained up to at least Feb. 14 (RA, MOB), another flew past Pigeon Point, SM, Feb. 6 (RT), and a third representative of the species was sighted on a pelagic trip in SCZ county waters Feb. 13 (DLSh). Pelagic trips in Monterey Bay also noted 4 Black-footed Albatross on Feb. 1 and 3 on Feb. 13 (DLSh).

Seven and 14 Pink-footed Shearwaters were recorded on Feb. 1 and 13 Monterey Bay pelagic trips, respectively (DLSh). Storms on Feb. 9 and 12 blew large numbers of Sooty Shearwaters near shore at Point Pinos, MTY (MPRBA). The aforementioned Feb. 1 pelagic trip recorded 38 Short-tailed Shearwaters, whereas 22 were counted on the Feb. 13 trip (DLSh); storm-borne birds were also recorded near Point Pinos, MTY, Feb. 9 and 12 (MPRBA). One other individual was seen off Pigeon Pt., SM, Feb. 14 (Ron Thorn). A **Manx Shearwater** (*Puffinus puffinus*) was spotted in SCZ Co. waters on a Feb. 13 pelagic trip (DLSh). Several of this species have been recorded on pelagic trips during this past year. Pelagic trips on Feb. 1 and 13 recorded 56 and 20 Black-vented Shearwaters (DLSh), good numbers were near Pt. Pinos, MTY, during the Feb. 12 storm (MPRBA), and two more were seen at Pigeon Pt., SM, Feb. 14 (RT). A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was at Pt. Pinos, MTY, Feb. 12 (MPRBA), and an Ashy Storm-Petrel near MTY Harbor, MTY, Feb. 9 narrowly escaped being caught by the resident Peregrine Falcon (MPRBA)! An immature **Masked Booby** (*Sula dactylatra*) was seen in SCZ waters on the Feb. 13 pelagic trip (DLSh). This pantropical species is extremely rare anywhere in CA waters (Small, 1994).

Geese to Ducks.

A few coastal Ross's Geese were reported, with single birds at Arcata Bottoms, HUM, Jan. 30 (N) and Feb. 22 (EE), at Carmel, MTY, Feb. 12 (MPRBA), El Estero Lake, MTY, Feb. 13 (MPRBA), at Crab Cove Visitor's Center, ALA, Feb. 22 (NC), and at Lucchesi Park, SON, Feb. 22 (AW). At least 39 Eurasian Wigeon were reported over 15 Northern California counties, with the highest counts of 5 birds at Brewer Rd., PLA, Feb. 4 (SA), and another 5 at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Feb. 15 (GF). An adult male Tufted Duck was found at the Sunnyvale pollution control plant, SCL, Jan. 30 (LH) and a second bird was at Martinez Shoreline Regional Park, CC, Feb. 7 (DW). A reported second record for LAK county was the male Tufted Duck in Clear Lake, Feb. 20 (DWo, JW). Three Harlequin Ducks continued at Glass Beach, MEN, Jan. 29 (MOB), and two were reported from Monterey Harbor, MTY, Feb. 2 (MPRBA) where one remained on Feb. 4-16 (DLSh, MPRBA).

The rare inland White-winged Scoter first noted Dec. 25 along Pacific Hts. Rd., Oroville, BUT (RR) continued up to at least Feb. 7. There were 16 Oldsquaws reported over ALA, MEN, MTY, SON and SM counties, with high counts of four at Abbott's Lagoon, MRN, PRNS, Feb. 7 (KH) and another 4 off Fort Ord, MTY, Feb. 13 or 14 (MPRBA). Hooded Mergansers were seen in MRN, MTY, SAC, SM and SUT counties with the largest concentrations of 23(!) at Redwood Shores Sewage Treatment Plant, SM, Feb. 4 (CL), and 19 at a pond near Tomales-Petaluma/Chileno Valley Rds., MRN, Feb. 23 (RH). On the negative side, a report in late Jan. from the *Contra Costa Times* indicated avian cholera mortality of at least 50,000 water birds in Northern and Central CA this year, apparently

Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Jan. 30 McKinleyville, HUM G

Nashville Warbler

Jan. 28-29 Arcata, HUM N

Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*)

Feb. 2-18 Jack's Peak State Pk., MTY MPRBA

Prairie Warbler

Feb. 15-23 Bodega Head, SON AW, JR

Palm Warbler

Jan. 31 Arcata, HUM N
Feb. 9 Bodega Marine Labs, SON MP
Feb. 21 Pillaritos Ck., SM RT

Black-and-white Warbler

Feb. 2 Rio Park, MTY MPRBA
Feb. 14 Pt. Arena, MEN DT
Feb. 17,22 Manila, HUM A

one of the worst outbreaks in memory. Affected species include "Aleutian" Canada Geese, Snow Geese, Ruddy Ducks and American Coots.

Raptors to Alcids.

A Swainson's Hawk was found at San Luis NWR, MER, Jan. 30 (KW). A juvenile light-morph Swainson's Hawk seen again south of Half Moon Bay, SM, Feb. 15 and 22 (GD, RT) may be the first wintering record for coastal Northern CA (per RT). A single Snowy Plover was seen at an unusual inland location at Folsom Lake, PLA, Feb. 17 (PD). A flock of 50 Mountain Plovers was spotted at Woodbridge Ecological Reserve, SJ, Feb. 2 (JGo). The MacKerricher State Park, MEN, Rock Sandpiper continued as of Jan. 29 (MOB). A Franklin's Gull was at Arcata Marsh, HUM, Feb. 13 (C), and another at Martinez Regional Shoreline, CC, Feb. 14 (SG). Eleven Glaucous Gulls were recorded over HUM, MTY, and SM counties. There was a report of "**Kumlien's Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucoideus kumlieni*) Feb. 12-19 in Alviso, SCL, (MR). This subspecies is normally confined to the N. Atlantic and breeds on S. Baffin Island, Canada (Harrison, 1985); it is difficult to separate from Thayer's Gull in the field and there are as yet no accepted records in CA. An extensive discussion of the identification problem is posted on Don Roberson's new website: <http://montereybay.com/creagrus/>. Another presumptive sighting of this bird occurred in Feb. of last year in MTY county. A Feb. 13 pelagic trip in Monterey Bay yielded a nice count of 983 Rhinoceros Auklets (DLSh).

Hummingbirds to Wood Warblers.

A male Costa's Hummingbird was observed at the Basalt Campgrounds, San Luis Dam, MER, Feb. 15-20 (KVV fide SG, SG, MF). Early *Selasphorus* reports included single Rufous Hummingbirds at Humboldt Bay, HUM, Feb. 18 (DF) and at Basalt Campgrounds, MER, Feb. 19 (SG). A male Red-naped Sapsucker, a very rare winter visitor in coastal CA (Small, 1994), was at San Leandro Reservoir, CC, Feb. 13-15 (RSc fide LF, DA). An early Pacific-slope Flycatcher was at Half Moon Bay, SM, Feb. 21 (RT). A **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*), normally found in Texas and Arizona, and a very rare winter visitor (Small, 1994) first reported Dec. 25 continued until at least Feb. 19 near Lobitas Creek, Half Moon Bay, SM (RT, AWi). Cassin's Kingbirds continue to be reported around SBT County, at the Paicines Reservoir and the NewIdria/Panoche Rd junction locations. The **Thick-billed Kingbird** (*Tyrannus crassirostris*), reported in December and January, continued at Half Moon Bay, SM, Feb. 3-20 (CM, GC, MOB). An early Barn Swallow was with Tree Swallows at Bethel Island, CC, Feb. 22 (GE), another was at the Merced NWR, MER, Feb. 20 (PG), and a third was at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Feb. 23 (KH).

Two or three American Dippers occupied an unusual lowland location along Lagunitas Creek near Samuel P. Taylor State Park, MRN, Feb. 4 (RS). Unusual Wood Warbler sightings were few during the period, but the **Grace's Warbler** (*Dendroica graciae*) continued to "grace" Jack's Peak Park, MTY through at least Feb. 18 (see Chart).

Abbreviations for Observers

SA, Steve Abbott; DA, Diane Ahlgren; A, Anderson; RA, Rick Areck; NC, Nick Cabanero; C, Cariss; GC, George Chamot; GD, Gary Deghi; PD, Pierre Delashe; MD, Matthew Dodder; H, Todd Easterla; EE, Elias Elias; GE, Graham Etherington; MI, Mike Feighner; GI, George Ingler; DI, David Iix; LE, Lillian Fujii; JG, Jim Gain; SG, Steve Glover; JGo, Janet Goodman; PG, Phil Gordon; KH, Keith Hansen; H, Hararra; RH, Rob Hayden; LLI, Hinchman Lynca; BL, Bob Lewis; CL, Calvin Lou; MOB, Many Observers; CM, Carol Miller; RM, Roger Muscat; N, Nelson; TN, Todd Newberry; MP, Mike Parmeter; RR, Redmond Richard; JR, Jean Richmond; MR, Mike Rodgers; RSc, Rusty Scall; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; KVV, Kent Van Vuren; KW, Kaynor Weishaupt; AW, Alan White; JW, Jerry White; DW, Denise Wight; DWi, Dan Williams; AWi, Adam Winer; DWo, Dave Woodward

Abbreviations for Counties and Others

ALA, Alameda; BUT, Butte; COL, Colusa; CC, Contra Costa; FRE, Fresno; GLE, Glenn; HUM, Humboldt; LAK, Lake; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MTY, Monterey; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; PLA, Placer; SAC, Sacramento; SBT, San Benito; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; SUT, Sutter

Sparrows to Orioles.

A Clay-colored Sparrow was discovered at a private feeder in Vacaville, SOL, Feb. 14 (RM). Vesper Sparrows were reported at several sites in the Panoche region, SBT/FRE, over the period (MF, MOB). A single Sage Sparrow was seen near Turlock Lake, STA, Jan. 28 (JG), and two or more were on the BLM Road, Panoche Valley, FRE, Jan. 31, Feb. 4 & 21 (MF, CL, PG). Of two birds at New Idria and Panoche Rds., (FRE/SBT), Feb. 6, one Sage Sparrow was of the *nevadaensis* race, which comes from the basin-range country of the interior, and is rare on the coast or in the coast ranges (RSc, BL), whereas the other was of the *belli*, or coastal race. It is possible that these subspecies may be elevated to full species status soon. A Lark Bunting was near Turlock Lake, STA, in a large sparrow flock, Jan. 28 (JG), a second individual was at Silver Creek Ranch, Panoche Valley, SBT/FRE, Feb. 5, 7 (TN, MD), and a third bird was reported from Maxwell Sites Rd., COL, ~Feb. 2 (TE). An immature Swamp Sparrow was seen at the Sacramento NWR, GLE, Jan. 30 (DWi). Three other individuals were spotted at Arcata Marsh, HUM, Feb. 7 (H), at the Iron house Sanitary District, CC, Feb. 14 (SG), and the Carmel R. mouth, MTY (MPRBA). The only *Calcarinus* reported was a Lapland Longspur at Arcata Bottoms, HUM, Feb. 25 (DF). The Baltimore Oriole first seen in December continued at Rio Park, MTY, Feb. 2, 4 (MPRBA).



April Meeting

"Alameda National Wildlife Refuge: An Ecosystem"

The Friends of the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge (FAWR), a GGAS committee, have just finalized an innovative, exciting and hands-on educational program for school children stressing the importance of biodiversity and the key role it plays in a delicate ecosystem such as the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.

Leora Feeney, chairperson of the FAWR committee, and several "friends", will preview the creative educational program they have developed at our April meeting. It will be very educational, informative, perhaps challenging and certainly promises to be a lot of fun. The program centers on a 30-minute slide program followed by creative activities stressing habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity.

The activities following the

Thursday, April 15, 1999

7:00 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church

Berkeley

slide presentation will include bird calls and identifications, habitat identification and the food pyramid. So come and learn more about the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and how it can be positively used to educate future generations about the importance of biodiversity.

Leora is a longtime Alameda resident, GGAS board member, activist, and Least Tern biologist who brings spirit and tireless energy to her work and to those around her.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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